EDU 221

Spring 2013

Curriculum Instruction Assessment (CIA)

FIAE Reflections – Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, of *Fair Isn’t Always Equal*, the author Rick Wormeli advocates for the use of “*tiering*” (p.56*)* as a means to better differentiate assignments and assessments. *Tiering* is a process by which teachers increase, or decrease, the level of difficulty of an assignment or assessment depending of the learners “readiness levels” (Wormeli, p56). This idea echoes back to Vgotsky idea of a “zone of proximal development,” (Wormeli, p73) in which the learner is given tasks, that are not too easy or too difficult, but can be achieved through the support of a guide or, as in this case, a teacher. The chapter provides several examples of ways to tier assessments. These include: equalizers, learning contracts, learning menus, tic-tac-toe boards, cubing, summarization pyramids, and one-word summaries.

Of all the ideas presented in this chapter, the one that appealed to me the most was the use of learning menus. Not only did I enjoy the novelty of using a menu format, I really loved the fact that this method gives students the opportunity to make their own choices. When students are able to make decisions about their educations they are more likely to be motivated to complete the task. The learning menu has other added benefits. In having a student choice component, teachers are provided with a great opportunity to incorporate the multiple intelligences (MI) theory into the mix. Each element on the menu could be constructed with one or more intelligences in mind. This way, students provided with an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a way that suits them, and it provides teachers with another opportunity to assess students’ multiple intelligences.